

# NEWSLETTER

## JULY, 1999

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UPDATE (JUNE 15 THRU JULY 15)

#### **Bioelectromagnetics Society Meeting**

California EMF Program staff and contractors had 18 presentations and posters at the Bioelectromagnetics Society (BEMS) Annual Meeting in late June. It also provided an opportunity for several side meetings related to the Program:

1. Tuesday, June 22, 1999, staff and contractors met with several stakeholders to finalize our approach to the peer review of the cost estimator used in the Power Grid Policy project.

2. Also on Tuesday, Program staff met with Karl Riley and Jon Sirugo to plan an instructional video funded jointly by the Program and Southern California Edison. It will demonstrate how improper neutral grounding can be detected and corrected at the breaker box during routine maintenance. This responds to the Enertech school survey finding suggesting such improper connections are the most common cause of elevated magnetic fields in California schools and pose a potential fire hazard.

3. Thursday, June 24, 1999, researchers who had attended the BEMS meeting met to discuss strategies for determining a physical mechanism linking magnetic fields with biological effects. Ross Adey, Asher Sheppard, Robert Liburdy, Indira Nair, Stefan Engstrom, Paul Gayley, Raymond Neutra, Vincent Del Pizzo, Leeka Kheifetz and Ken McLeod were involved. EMF Program contractor Dr. Paul Gayley will use insights from this discussion as part of the biophysics chapter of the future Risk Evaluation document.

#### **Meeting with California Public Utilities Commission Staff**

On June 28, 1999, EMF Program staff met with staff of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to discuss the Program's draft progress report. CPUC staff asked us to supplement this report with a detailed description of how we plan to involve stakeholders in the policy projects, risk evaluation, and endgame in general. As a preliminary response, we showed them the timelines for the policy projects and Risk Evaluation Guidelines that we distributed for stakeholder comment earlier last month.

At this meeting, CPUC staff agreed to be actively involved in the review of the policy projects, particularly with the issues of reliability and project costs (including the peer review of costs and the total project).

Due date for stakeholder comments on the draft report is July 30, 1999. Then it must be revised and approved by the California Department of Health Services before being submitted.

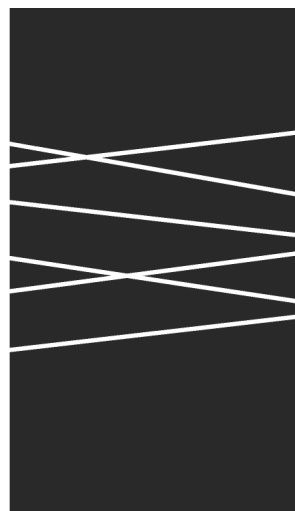
#### **Contract with Dr. Robert Liburdy**

Dr. Raymond Neutra has asked the Program's core stakeholders to comment on our contract with Dr. Robert Liburdy in light of accusations that he may have misrepresented some data in a 1990 study.

#### **Expanding Future Stakeholder Participation**

Netty Hoge of Towards Utility Rate Normalization has agreed to have her staff review the Power Grid Policy Analysis and will consider becoming active as a stakeholder again.

Raymond Neutra has contacted the California Manufacturers Association and the California Chamber of Commerce, among others, to invite them to participate in future SAC meetings and to request their comments on the Risk Assessment Guidelines and the Power Grid Policy project.



## California EMF Program

A project of the California  
Department of Health Services  
and the Public Health Institute

## Research Unit Progress

### Risk Evaluation Guidelines

**Draft Released:** The California EMF Program's Risk Evaluation Guidelines are now ready for public comment. The public comment draft of these Risk Evaluation Guidelines is posted on the California EMF Program Web site (<http://www.dnai.com/~emf>) in a printable format, and hard copies will be provided upon request. The authors of these guidelines will be available at two "clarification" sessions in early August to answer questions, help the public understand it and prepare written comments. For more information about these workshops or to request a copy contact Cherry at the EMF Program. As requested by the stakeholders, Program staff have sent drafts of this document to the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, The World Health Organization, and former members of the National Academy of Sciences committee that studied this issue.

**Review Process:** Comments on the draft are due by Monday, August 30, 1999. The authors will respond to written comments received by this date and will consider in revising the draft. Comments received after this date will not be considered.

When the authors have completed revision comments and responses will be sent with the revised draft to the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) for approval. After CDHS approves the revised draft, this draft and the public comments will be sent to the members of the Science Advisory Panel for review and released to the public. The SAP will meet to discuss the draft and vote on whether it is scientifically sound. The CDHS Risk Evaluation will begin once SAP approval is received.

### **Reminder: Comments Due**

Core SAC members must get their comments on the California EMF Program's draft report to the CPUC to Jessica Hecht by Friday, July 30, 1999.

### School Policy Analysis

A "nearly final" model and a final draft of the model documentation have been delivered for review by Program staff.

### Power Grid Policy Project

The Program received the bulk of the Power Grid project documentation on July 2, 1999. In an expedited review Program staff determined that further sensitivity analyses are needed to address anticipated concerns of our stakeholders. We are also encouraging Decision Insights to make sure that the executive summary, which we have not yet seen, is as understandable as possible. Detlof von Winterfeldt of Decision Insights feels that the additional work required by these requests can be completed within about a month. Barring unforeseen delays, we anticipate distributing the draft materials by the end of August to allow time for a more thorough Program review before release. In addition, Dr. Nancy Ryan has converted the statewide figures generated in a report commissioned by concerned citizens into per-mile numbers to assess their comparability with the numbers generated by Decision Insights. We expect to release this analysis for comment at the same time as the Power Grid Policy project draft materials.

We would like to remind readers that the policy analysis can be used by the various stakeholders much the way that a family buying a car would use the options provided by the Consumer Reports. Factual information about the various options is helpful, but different family members will prefer different cars and different stakeholders will have different preferences after seeing the insights provided by this project. We hope that the analysis will clarify which criteria have most influence and narrow down the options.

Discussion of the draft materials by stakeholders and members of the public, which will begin after the draft's release, will be very important to completing both policy projects. Our process for encouraging open discussion and comment is described below.

**Power Grid Project Cost Evaluation:** After discussions at the BEMS meeting with Kent Jaffa, Randy Erickson, Peter Frech and Cindy Sage, we have asked both Commonwealth Associates and William Albin of NK Cables USA, Inc., to evaluate the cost estimating Program used in the Power Grid Policy project. For this review, we will select some typical scenarios, such as the retrofit of 115 kV transmission lines by undergrounding and by re-phasing, and ask them to provide the following

information:

- the distribution, mean, geometric mean, standard deviation and geometric standard deviation of the per-mile costs of such projects over the last five years in their experience
- their comments on whether the costs predicted by the model are within the range of their experience
- the terms in the cost equations responsible for deviations from the costs predicted by the model after benchmarking a particular project
- a proposed a multiplier to be used in the Power Grid Model to correct for any systematic error they perceive in the model
- their comments on the technical feasibility of options in the estimator

**Review Process for Policy Projects:** Over the next several months, we expect to distribute the draft Power Grid Policy and School Policy project drafts to our stakeholders and other interested parties. Once these drafts are available, the process for completing these projects is as follows.

Stakeholders and interested members of the public will have a six-week review period in which to prepare written comments on the software models and documentation. During this time, EMF Program staff will hold a workshop for stakeholders and the public. We expect these workshops will include an opportunity to use the software, as well as time to ask questions about the written materials. At the end of this comment period, EMF Program staff and contractors will review and summarize these comments, and prepare a plan for incorporating or responding to them. We will then hold a Stakeholders Advisory Committee meeting to discuss summary to ensure that the staff have adequately represented the concerns expressed in the comments. The project drafts, original comments, and staff summaries of and responses to the comments will be sent to the peer reviewers. Then Program staff and contractors will prepare final versions of the models and documentation, making changes as required by the peer reviewers.

Once final drafts are available, EMF Program staff will hold a retreat for our core stakeholders to discuss the insights of these models and look for areas of consensus between the different groups of stakeholders. We hope to complete this process in the late summer of the year 2000, if we do not experience unforeseen delays.

## Other Research Unit Projects

**Epidemiology Workshop:** Work is continuing on editing the discussions from last January's workshop (the original file was destroyed by a virus). Three papers are ready for submission to BEMS for publication.

**Prospective Miscarriage Study:** Data entry and cleaning are continuing.

**School Exposure Assessment Survey:** Two of the three peer reviewers' comments have been received, and the third is preparing his comments. The Executive Summary of this report was distributed in the June 21, 1999, EMF Program Mailing.

**Supplementary Exposure Investigation in Conjunction with U.S.C. Breast Cancer Study:** Completed December, 1998.

**California Exposure Analysis:** This project will focus on the episode analysis of the data from the prospective miscarriage study of one thousand women in San Francisco. Dr. Dan Bracken has submitted a tentative scope of work it. Before finalizing it with the Program staff, he plans to discuss data analysis strategies further with his associates.

**Occupational Exposure to EMF:** Validation of the Internet questionnaires is continuing.

**Electric Car Workshop:** Completed in spring, 1999.

**Policy Integration:** Awaiting for conclusion of the two policy analysis projects before a precise scope for this project is formulated.

**Risk Evaluation:** See under BEMS meeting update, above.

**EMF Program Library:** Webb Sprague, the EMF Program's Research Assistant, continues to organize our library, indexing articles and reports that we already have and obtaining the ones we need. After this is done, we will have a complete, searchable library of literature on EMF issues for use by staff and the contractors in the Risk Evaluation.

## Education and Technical Assistance Unit

### BEMS Meeting Activities

The Education and Technical Assistance Unit staffed a booth to publicize the Programs work among the scientific community. In this booth we set up a poster containing a general overview of the Program, our projects, and our materials, and displayed a sample module from the Power Grid/Land Use Policy project on a laptop to allow BEMS participants to become familiar with the policy analysis software. Program staff were available at this booth throughout most of the meeting. Staff also arranged scholarships to help several members of the public attend the meeting. We appreciate the enthusiasm of the scholarship recipients who attended.

### Web Site

In the past month Unit staff have continued updating materials to be put on our Web site when it is reorganized later this summer. We have posted the Risk Evaluation Guidelines to be accessible during the current public comment period. After the site is reorganized, it will include general information as well as links to our educational materials (including Spanish translations of our fact sheets), Program reports and other products.

### Risk Evaluation Guidelines

#### Public Comment Period

Unit staff assisted the Research Unit by preparing announcements and cover materials to distribute with the Risk Evaluation Guidelines draft and coordinating distribution. Staff have also been involved in planning the Guidelines clarification sessions in early August.

#### Index to Meeting Materials and Mailings

The Program has hired an assistant, Al Roth, to spend the summer organizing and indexing our meeting materials and mailings since the beginning of the Program. He is entering them into a database for easier accessibility through the end of the Program and beyond.

### Other Recent Activities

This unit has taken the lead in planning the processes for ensuring stakeholder and public involvement in the completion of the Risk Evaluation Guidelines and the policy projects. Staff are continuing to work on new educational materials, and regularly respond to questions and requests from stakeholders and members of the public.

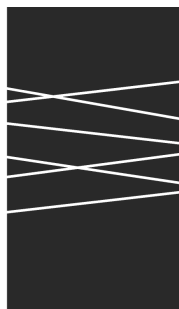
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### EMF PROGRAM STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

*note Raymond's new email address*

	(510)			(510)	
Raymond Neutra	622-4905	rneutra@igc.apc.org	Jack Collins	622-4431	emfadmin@dnai.com
Alvin Leonard	622-4432	alvinleonard@yahoo.com	Maria Giron	622-4433	mlgiron@netscape.net
Vincent Del Pizzo	622-4418	delpizzo@yahoo.com	Cherry Elliott	622-4434	emf@dnai.com
Geraldine Lee	622-5091	gerrilee17@yahoo.com	Webb Sprague	622-4500	emf@dnai.com
Jessica Hecht	622-4430	emf-educ@dnai.com	Al Roth	622-4500	emf@dnai.com
main phone (510) 622-4500, fax (510) 622-4505					

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A project of the California Department of Health Services and the Public Health Institute  
Elihu Harris State Office Building  
1515 Clay St., 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**California  
EMF  
Program**